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Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Project Quarterly Performance Report April – June 2015

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AO	Agreement Officer
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CO	Contracting Officer
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CRP	Community Resilience Program
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DO	Development Objective
DQA	Data Quality Assessment
EGRP	Early Grade Reading Program
FY	Fiscal Year
GIS	Geographic Information System
H4L	Health for Life
IGP	Integrated Governance Project
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Intermediate Result
KISAN	Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition
KM	Knowledge Management
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheet
PMP	Performance Management Plan
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) project is to support the achievement of USAID/Nepal's Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objectives by assisting the mission in planning, designing, conducting, disseminating, and learning from more rigorous monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of development activities. This includes designing and implementing both quantitative and qualitative evaluations and assessments as well as providing expert analysis and technical assistance to USAID/Nepal's programs.

The initial stage of this quarter was marked by a strong earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.9 on the Richter scale that jolted Nepal on April 25, 2015. The epicenter of this massive earthquake was Barpak, a mountain village between capital city Kathmandu and Pokhara, a tourist town. Barpak was decimated, with severe damage to several historical buildings. More than 9,000 casualties were reported throughout Nepal. Numerous powerful aftershocks followed, and they continue to affect the day-to-day lives of the general Nepali population even now. Despite the challenges, the MEL project hired all senior staff, opened its project office, and established administrative and financial procedures. The project also completed and delivered its first annual work plan along with the corresponding M&E plan. In addition, the MEL project has been able to meet all contract deliverables as scheduled.

Highlights of activities performed during the quarter, by Component, are as follows:

Component 1. Under the supervision of the performance management specialist/MEL project, the team initiated a comprehensive review of the mission's performance management plan. In addition, under the guidance of the responsible Agreement and Contracting Officer's Representatives (AOR/CORs), MEL project staff initiated reviews of the M&E plans of key implementing partners and began planning for site visits to assess their M&E processes and capacity that would be accompanied by data quality assessments of key indicators.

Component 2. Under the supervision of the MEL project's evaluation specialist, project staff also provided key learning by doing capacity building support to responsible AOR/CORs at the initial stages of the evaluation design process. As a part of this capacity-building effort, the team utilized a standardized approach that would support improved articulation of evaluation questions based on the types of answers needed by the mission, methodologies for addressing them, and data needs/limitations to implement those methodologies.

Component 3. By the end of the quarter, the MEL project's knowledge management (KM) advisor, Lorene Flaming, commenced her consulting agreement to engage in a preliminary assessment of the mission's KM tools and practices, both existing and needed.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the MEL project is to support the achievement of USAID/Nepal's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) Development Objectives (DOs) by assisting the mission in planning, designing, conducting, disseminating, and learning from more rigorous M&E of development activities. This includes designing and implementing both quantitative and qualitative evaluations and assessments and providing expert analysis and technical assistance to USAID/Nepal's programs.

The MEL project will also support the mission to measure the effectiveness of its efforts to promote gender equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex individuals; and historically disadvantaged caste and ethnic groups.

USAID/Nepal will use the products and deliverables from the MEL project to 1) facilitate informed program management, 2) shape the longer-term strategic direction of programs and decision-making within the mission, and 3) enable USAID/Nepal to comply with Agency accountability and M&E requirements.

The MEL project has three Components as outlined below:

Component 1: Support greater rigor and coherence in USAID/Nepal's M&E efforts

- Provide technical assistance for the performance management plan (PMP) and project- and activity-level M&E plans.
- Strengthen the capacity of USAID/Nepal staff to conduct M&E tasks and use data effectively.
- Strengthen the performance monitoring capacity of USAID/Nepal implementing partners (IPs).

Component 2: Design and conduct analyses, evaluations, surveys, studies, and assessments

- Conduct performance and impact evaluations.
- Conduct surveys, studies, assessments, and analyses.

Component 3: Support improved knowledge management within the mission

Assist the mission to improve its knowledge management (KM) practices—including use of AIDTracker Plus or other USAID performance monitoring or KM systems.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE

Progress toward achievement of purpose

On April 25, 2015, 10 days after the MEL contract was effective, Nepal experienced a major and deadly earthquake registering 7.9 on the Richter scale, causing 9,061 fatalities and 23,447 injuries. This was followed by months of earthquakes and aftershocks, of which nearly 100 have registered 4.0 or higher on the Richter scale.

Although this caused some delays in project start up, the MEL project was able to operationalize and initiate tasks and subtasks under all three Components during the quarter. Following the earthquake, CAMRIS International immediately signaled to the mission that the MEL project stood ready to assist in whatever was required to plan for earthquake recovery. By the end of the quarter, the project was responding to the mission's needs for realignment of its PMP to accomplish this.

Progress toward completion of outputs and deliverables

During the quarter, the MEL project hired all senior staff, opened its project office, and established administrative and financial procedures. The project also completed and delivered its first annual work plan and its corresponding M&E plan, in addition to meeting all other contract deliverables as scheduled.

Component 1. The MEL project initiated a comprehensive review of the mission's PMP under the supervision of its performance management specialist. Under the guidance of the responsible Agreement and Contracting Officer's Representatives (AOR/CORs), MEL project staff initiated reviews of the M&E plans of key IPs and began planning for site reviews of their M&E processes and capacity that would be accompanied by data quality assessments (DQAs) of key indicators.

Component 2. Under the supervision of the MEL project's evaluation specialist, project staff also provided key "learning by doing capacity building to responsible AOR/CORs at the initial stages of evaluation design. To do so, the team used a standardized approach to improve the articulation of evaluation questions based on the types of answers needed by the mission, methodologies for addressing them, and data needs/limitations to implement those methodologies. (See **Annex A.**)

Component 3. The MEL project's KM advisor, Lorene Flaming, commenced her consulting agreement to conduct a preliminary assessment of the mission's KM tools and practices, both existing and needed.

Progress of indicators against targets

The MEL project submitted its draft M&E plan as an Annex to the project's first annual work plan within 60 days of project initiation for review by the project COR.

The following matrix illustrates the progress made against achievement of targets during the quarter April – June 2015 for each of the indicators in the draft M&E plan.¹

Result	Indicator Type	Verification / Data Source	Year 1 Targets	Status Report
Extent to which USAID/Nepal program exhibits strong planning, designing, and implementation based on MEL project interventions	Outcome	Mid-term and end-of-project evaluations	-	The project intends to carry out both mid-term and end-of-project performance evaluations to address the extent to which this objective has been met.
IR 1-1: Percent of USAID/ Nepal program staff using data for programmatic improvements	Outcome	MEL Annual Survey	Baseline	MEL project staff are designing an online survey tool to conduct the baseline survey with the intention of implementing it in the next quarter.
IR 1-2: Number of ADS-compliant project M&E plans reviewed and updated (annual)	Outcome	Project Monitoring System	0	The targets for this indicator may need to be reviewed in light of the mission's request for PMP realignment to accommodate earthquake recovery activities.
Sub-IR 1.1.1: Number of ADS-compliant, mission-approved activity M&E plans (annual)	Output	Project Monitoring System	20	The review of activity M&E plans of five (5) selected IPs was initiated led by the responsible AOR/CORs of each activity.
Sub-IR 1.1.2: Number of USAID staff who	Output	Capacity-building	35	This training will follow completion of the training

¹ Some indicators have been added, reflecting additions to the MEL annual survey to cross-check awareness of reported results.

Result	Indicator Type	Verification / Data Source	Year 1 Targets	Status Report
know how to select quality performance indicators and establish realistic performance targets (cumulative)		pre- and post-tests		plan to be developed later in the project year.
Sub-IR 1.2.1: Number of USAID staff who complete experiential training as per capacity-building Plans (annual)	Output	Project Monitoring System	25	Experiential training was offered to selected USAID staff in how to develop evaluation questions and how to assess activity M&E plans.
Sub-IR 1.2.2: Number of IP staff who complete experiential training as per capacity-building plans (annually)	Output	Project Monitoring System	0	The Year 1 target for this indicator may need to be revised because IP staff have been already participating in experiential training on development of evaluation questions and assessment of activity M&E plans.
Sub-IR 1.3.1: Number of regularly scheduled DQAs completed	Output	Project Monitoring System	11	The mission plans to begin conducting DQAs in August/September of 2015 with the support of the MEL team.
IR 2.1: Percent of evaluations with recommendations that have been applied (measured six months after completion)	Outcome	Data use plan tracking	0 percent	<p>The evaluation specialist/MEL project will follow up with respective AOR/CORs after six months of each evaluation to track the status of implementation of recommendations.</p> <p>A generic question on the status of the implementation of recommendations will be incorporated in the self-</p>

Result	Indicator Type	Verification / Data Source	Year 1 Targets	Status Report
				assessment survey to understand the level of awareness among USAID staff regarding implementation of the recommendations.
IR 2.2: Percent of studies with recommendations that have been applied (measured six months after completion)	Outcome	Data use plan tracking	0 percent	<p>The evaluation specialist/MEL project will follow up with respective AOR/CORs after six months of each evaluation to track the status of implementation of recommendations.</p> <p>A generic question on the status of the implementation of recommendations will be incorporated in the self-assessment survey to understand the level of awareness among USAID staff regarding implementation of the recommendations.</p>
Sub-IR 2.1.1: Number of impact evaluations designed/initiated with baseline surveys	Output	Data use plan tracking	3	Design of several impact evaluations is planned for the next quarter, but baseline surveys have been delayed until later in the project year.
Sub-IR 2.1.2: Number of impact evaluations completed	Output	Data use plan tracking		
Sub-IR 2.1.3: Number of performance evaluations completed	Output	Project Monitoring System	1	

Result	Indicator Type	Verification / Data Source	Year 1 Targets	Status Report
Sub-IR 2.2.1: Number of surveys, assessments, and studies completed	Output	Project Monitoring System	1	
IR 3.1: Percent of USAID staff who report using the M&E/KM system for decision making	Outcome	MEL Annual Survey	Baseline	MEL project staff are designing an online survey tool to conduct the baseline survey with the intention of implementing it in the next quarter.
Sub-IR 3.1.1: Percent of registered users who use the M&E/KM system	Output	KM application logs	Baseline	The baseline will occur after the online M&E/KM system applications are designed, to accompany AIDTracker Plus.
Sub-IR 3.2.1: Proportion of approved KM assessment recommendations fully implemented	Output	Project Monitoring System MEL Annual Survey	0 -	<p>The KM advisor/MEL project will follow up with respective AOR/CORs after six months of submission of the assessment recommendations to track the status of their implementation.</p> <p>A generic question on the status of the implementation of recommendations will be incorporated into the online MEL Annual Survey to assess the level of awareness among USAID staff regarding implementation of the recommendations.</p>
Sub-IR 3.3.1: Percent of portfolio reviews including analysis beyond indicator	Outcome	Portfolio reviews MEL Annual Survey	33.4 percent -	The KM advisor/MEL project will follow up with respective AOR/CORs after six months of submission of the assessment recommendations to track

Result	Indicator Type	Verification / Data Source	Year 1 Targets	Status Report
frequencies (i.e. analyzing how indicators relate)				<p>the status of their implementation.</p> <p>A generic question on the status of the implementation of recommendations will be incorporated into the online MEL Annual Survey to assess the level of awareness among USAID staff regarding implementation of the recommendations.</p>

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

List of Deliverables and Outputs

The following matrix illustrates the reports/deliverables completed during the period April – June 2015, along with a status report and comments on each.

Work Plan Component/ Task Number	Description	Date Due	Completed (Y/N)	Status Report	Comments
N/A	First annual work plan	6/15	Y	Under review by USAID	Amendment 1 postponed several deliverables, and the work plan will be revised to reflect those changes.
N/A	Finalized M&E plan	6/15	Y	Under review by USAID	For some indicators, target revisions and more detailed articulation of PIRS are underway.
2.1.1	Initiation of EGRP impact evaluation	5/15	Y	Impact evaluation definition continues with DO 3 (education) team	Impact evaluation design to occur in Aug/Sept 2015

Results achieved by the MEL project within each Component, by task and subtask, during the quarter, are presented in detail below. Project activities planned in the next quarter are presented in a subsequent section.

Component 1: Support greater rigor and coherence in USAID/Nepal's M&E efforts

- **Subtask 1.1.1: Conduct PMP review.** As part of the MEL project mandate to support greater rigor and coherence in USAID/Nepal's M&E efforts, the MEL team reviewed the mission's 2014-2019 PMP (revised April 2015). The team employed a number of tools and techniques that included assessing related documents, developing and using a review checklist, and meeting with each DO team along with COR and Program Office staff to cross-check preliminary findings and conclusions. (See **Annex B**.)

The review examined the appropriateness and feasibility of indicators at the Goal, DO and IR levels. The concept of appropriateness was assessed according to the mission's development hypothesis at each level, and the concept of feasibility was assessed according to a review of the Performance Indicator Reference Sheet (PIRS) for each indicator. The team also reviewed the status of baseline data collection for all PMP indicators.

The MEL team also met with USAID/Nepal's earthquake recovery team, who requested support in reviewing and realigning the mission's PMP to incorporate planning for earthquake recovery funding under the rubric of "resilience." The MEL team will support the mission in refining and finalizing the PMP along those lines in the next quarter.

- **Subtask 1.1.2: Conduct review of project- and activity-level M&E plans.** The COR identified five activity-level M&E plans for reviews to be led by the AOR/CORs of each activity. Under the leadership of the responsible AOR/CORs, the MEL team reviewed M&E plans of USAID/Nepal activities, the Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP), and Sajhedari Bikas this quarter. To standardize the process across all reviews, the team developed and used an M&E plan review checklist. (**See Annex C.**)
- **Subtask 1.1.3: Conduct assessment of IP M&E processes and capacity.** MEL staff began designing a self-assessment tool to be administered in the context of the annual MEL survey. The tool will guide the MEL team in determining the strengths and gaps in IP M&E processes from the perspective of IP staff members.
- **Subtask 1.2.1: Assess USAID and IP M&E competencies.** MEL staff began developing a self-assessment M&E competency questionnaire that will be implemented during the next quarter. It will be administered as an online survey to assess the M&E knowledge and skills of USAID and IP staff to identify strengths that can be built on as well as gaps that need to be addressed through capacity building.
- **Subtask 1.3.1: Assess mission Geographic Information System (GIS) use.** The MEL project's first annual work plan folded the GIS assessment within the overall KM assessment to be performed under Component 3 beginning in the next quarter.
- **Subtask 1.3.2: Support USAID staff in the conduct of DQAs.** The MEL team suggested including and supporting the conduct of planned DQAs in the field visits to assess M&E processes of selected IPs (subtask 1.1.3). The Program Office and the AOR/CORs of each activity endorsed this suggestion.

The MEL technical team reviewed a DQA report of the Sajhedari Bikas activity and discussed with the AOR and IP management about a field visit to perform a follow-up DQA in the next quarter. The DQA will be one of five to be conducted during the next quarter, in tandem with field visits to assess IP M&E processes (subtask 1.1.3).

Component 2: Design and conduct analyses, evaluations, surveys, studies, and assessments

- **Task 2.1: Performance and impact evaluations.** MEL technical staff held meetings with each of the three DO teams to discuss their evaluation and assessment needs and expected timing during the project year. Each DO team had planned to conduct an impact evaluation to be initiated during the first project year. In addition to the evaluations already planned for the project year, the DO 2 team wanted the project to help them plan and carry out a mid-term activity performance evaluation of the Knowledge-based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture and Nutrition (KISAN) activity, managed by Winrock International, for possible initiation in late September. The MEL project team is planning to engage with the DO 2 team to discuss the evaluation questions as well as the draft scope of work in the next quarter.
- **Subtask 2.1.1: Initiate EGRP impact evaluation.** The MEL team met with the DO 3 team and the IP to define the EGRP impact evaluation in April 2015. It was determined that the impact evaluation baseline survey would be integrated into a baseline survey to be conducted by the EGRP itself, utilizing the services of its subcontractor New ERA, with appropriate controls exerted over selection of control and treatment groups. The MEL team will oversee the impact evaluation survey team and take the lead in data analysis. It is most probable that the evaluation will be carried out utilizing a mixed-methods approach. Subsequent meetings were devoted to articulation of the evaluation questions, methods to address them, and data limitations pertaining to each.
- **Subtask 2.1.2: Initiate Community Resilience Program (CRP) impact evaluation.** The evaluation definition was initiated in April 2015 and followed up through meetings between the MEL Chief of Party (COP) and Deputy COP (DCOP) and representatives of the DO 2 team. The discussion focused on the theory of change underpinning the concept of resilience as well as the use of both control and treatment groups in the survey planned for an impact evaluation by the DO 2 team under the auspices of Food for Peace.
- **Subtask 2.1.3: Initiate Integrated Governance Project (IGP) impact evaluation.** The evaluation definition was initiated in April 2015 and followed up through meetings between the MEL COP and DCOP and representatives of the DO 1 team. The discussion focused on the theory of change underpinning the concept of integrated governance; further definition of the impact evaluation will be required.
- **Subtask 2.1.4: Conduct Health for Life (H4L) mid-term evaluation.** The MEL team met with the representatives of the DO 3 team devoted to the health sector, and were informed that a mid-term performance evaluation would be needed as soon as possible. As a follow-up to the meeting, the COR forwarded a draft of the scope of work to the MEL team for peer review. The MEL project will actively engage with the mission to begin planning for this evaluation, which is expected to take place in October 2015.

- **Task 2.2: Surveys, studies, and sector assessments.** At the request of the DO 1 team, the MEL team provided technical review of the questionnaire of the planned Inclusive Democracy and Governance survey to be implemented by National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago in September 2015. Also, the COP and DCOP met with the COR and the mission's Communications Officer to offer a peer review of the scope of work for the Private Sector Landscape analysis in the context of anticipated earthquake recovery assistance.

Component 3: Support improved knowledge management within the Mission

- **Subtask 3.1.1: Assess mission's KM tools and practices.** The long-term KM advisor was recruited and mobilized on June 28, 2015, to lead Component 3 activities, beginning with the KM assessment. The MEL work plan has integrated some relevant tasks from other Components into the KM assessment, including subtask 1.3.1 (an assessment of GIS), and subtask 1.3.3 (integration of AIDTracker Plus.
- **Subtask 3.1.2: Prepare and submit for approval draft work plan to implement assessment recommendations.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the quarter. It is scheduled for completion after the KM assessment is submitted for approval.
- **Subtask 3.1.3: Prepare and submit for approval training plan, syllabus, trainer's manual, and course references for training needed to carry out work plan.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the quarter. It is scheduled for completion after the KM assessment and work plan are both submitted for approval.
- **Subtask 3.1.4: Implement KM work plan and training plan.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the quarter. Implementation of the KM training plan will commence following its approval by the COR.
- **Subtask 3.1.5: Prepare annual KM report.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the quarter.
- **Subtask 3.1.6: Facilitate learning summits.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the quarter.
- **Subtask 3.1.7: Conduct annual KM survey.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the quarter.

COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

Several introductory and follow-up meetings were held between the MEL technical staff team and USAID/Nepal staff, including the COR, DO team leaders, and the Program Office Director. The MEL team worked in close coordination with the responsible AOR/CORs of the Program Office to seek inputs on the activity M&E plan review as well as peer reviews of evaluation scopes of work.

Project staff have also been actively coordinating and collaborating with senior IP staff to establish effective mechanisms for coordinated M&E plan reviews, M&E process reviews and DQAs, KM assessments, baseline surveys for impact evaluations, as well as performance evaluation implementation. Upon USAID's request, ongoing coordination will include peer reviews of evaluation scopes of work. In addition, a project launch is also planned for the next quarter—to which M&E points of contact from USAID and all IPs will be invited—to further improve coordination and collaboration.

Analysis and implications

The project has yet to collect and analyze data in this first quarter. In the future, this section will be reserved for analysis and drawing implications for management.

CHALLENGES AND LOOKING AHEAD

On April 25, 2015, Nepal experienced a major and deadly earthquake registering 7.9 on the Richter scale, causing 9,061 fatalities and 23,447 injuries. This was followed by months of earthquakes and aftershocks, of which nearly 100 have registered 4.0 or higher on the Richter scale.

CAMRIS International mobilization team member Zelma Harrison was evacuated on April 28 before she could complete her scope of work. As a result of the earthquake, there was a minor delay in employing MEL core staff as well as entering a lease for the MEL project Office. While CAMRIS International continued mobilization support from its headquarters, there was a slight delay in the office opening and initiation of activities.

PLAN FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

The plan for each Component for the upcoming quarter is as follows:

Component 1: Support greater rigor and coherence in USAID/Nepal's M&E efforts

- **Subtask 1.1.1: Conduct PMP review.** The MEL technical team will submit the PMP review and provide peer review comments on the draft scope of work for realignment of the PMP to incorporate planning for earthquake recovery funding under the rubric of “resilience.” Once the scope of work is approved, the project will support the mission in conducting the realignment through preparation for and facilitation of a workshop to be attended by cognizant mission staff.
- **Subtask 1.1.2: Conduct review of project- and activity-level M&E plans.** MEL technical staff will continue to review the remaining three activity-level M&E plans forwarded by the COR and provide observations and comments to the Program Office and AOR/CORs on their compliance with the PMP. Moreover, the team will also meet with the respective DO and IP teams to share the findings of the reviews that were completed during the first quarter.

They will also develop an M&E plan review handbook, with procedures, checklists, and templates for DQA reviews and evaluation planning, and provide support as needed to M&E plan reviews with each of the IPs led by the respective AOR/CORs of each activity. As part of support to realignment of the mission's PMP, the MEL project will also review project (DO)-level M&E plans or Project Appraisal Documents provided by the COR.

- **Subtask 1.1.3: Conduct assessment of IP M&E processes and capacity.** As discussed with each of the DO teams and the Program Office, MEL technical team members will participate in field visits to assess the M&E processes and capacity of IPs currently executing the Sajhedari Bikas, KISAN, and H4L activities. They will be led by the AOR/CORs of each activity, with Program Office participation, as scheduled by USAID with each of the respective IPs.
- **Subtask 1.2.1: Assess USAID and IP M&E competencies.** The MEL project will implement online self-assessments of the M&E competencies of USAID and IP staff as the first stage of the competency assessment and then conduct interviews with DO team leaders, AOR/CORs, and Program Office representatives, as appropriate, to cross-check preliminary findings and conclusions from the self-assessment about the strengths and gaps in USAID and IP M&E competencies.
- **Subtask 1.2.2: Develop M&E training plan for mission and IP staff.** Integrating the results of the competency assessments performed under subtask 1.1.3, the MEL team will initiate development of an M&E training plan for mission and IP staff.

- **Subtask 1.2.3: Develop M&E training syllabus and course modules.** The MEL project will assemble and adapt course materials for the two course modules in M&E topics to be delivered in the final quarters of the project year. These materials will be customized and adapted into modules suitable for the Nepal context, emphasizing experiential learning, or learning-by-doing. The course materials will include a syllabus, a participants' manual, and course references. The topics to be covered in the M&E course modules will be based on assessments of USAID and IP staff M&E competencies and the M&E training plan for mission and IP staff approved by the Program Office (subtask 1.2.2).
- **Subtask 1.3.1: Assess mission GIS use.** The KM advisor will meet with DO team leaders, AOR/CORs and the Program Office staff, including the GIS specialist, to assess both the use and relevance of GIS within the mission and the potential for developing GIS as a tool to enhance KM and learning. This subtask will be fully integrated with subtask 3.1.1—an assessment of the mission's KM tools and practices, which will include forward planning for an integrated information system to improve KM and learning.
- **Subtask 1.3.2: Support USAID staff in the conduct of DQAs.** MEL technical team members will also support the conduct of DQAs in field visits to assess M&E processes of the Sajhedari Bikas, KISAN, and H4L activities (subtask 1.1.3) under the leadership of the respective AOR/CORs of each activity. The support will include, among other items, the following actions:
 - Review existing mission DQA procedures, tools, and results. Conduct reviews of DQAs that have been performed and of the implementation of their recommendations by IPs.
 - Establish a DQA schedule with mission staff and IPs.
 - Conduct hands-on (experiential) DQA training for mission staff and IPs during the conduct of the DQAs.
- **Subtask 1.3.4: Assist USAID in preparation of annual performance report.** Working closely with the mission M&E team, MEL staff will prepare an annual Performance Monitoring and Data Quality report for fiscal year (FY) 2015 that analyzes and presents data on all performance indicators included in the mission's PMP.

The report will note trends in the indicators data, determine if targets have been met, and determine if project outputs and outcomes are consistent with planned changes identified in the mission CDCS. The report must include analysis of changes in Nepal's development context, of cross-cutting indicators and assumptions, aggregate data, and trends. It is anticipated that the recent earthquakes and aftershocks in Nepal will have a huge impact on the country's development context.

In consultation with the Program Office, the MEL project will also engage in data collection efforts as needed to ensure that data presented on all PMP indicators are

of high quality. This may include collecting data from AIDTracker Plus (or other USAID performance monitoring or KM systems) and project and activity M&E plans; summarizing third-party data; assessing data quality; or conducting original data collection efforts.

The annual performance monitoring and data quality report will help the mission prepare for portfolio reviews, the Performance Plan and Report, and annual PMP updates. Until AIDTracker Plus is established, the report will be based on quarterly and annual reports from IPs, and an Excel sheet circulated by USAID with the request for IPs to report on standard indicators.

As presented under subtask 1.1.3, the MEL project will work with AOR/CORs and the Program Office's M&E team to review the data collection methodologies, approaches, and other related documentation of selected IPs to ensure that results and indicators are aligned with those of the mission, definitions are clear, and data reporting formats are standardized to streamline data collection and entry.

As scheduled in the work plan, the MEL project will provide a written report annually on the review and verification of activity-level results in consultation with the Program Office, as a part of project support in preparation of the annual performance report.

Component 2: Design and conduct analyses, evaluations, surveys, studies, and assessments

- **Task 2.1: Performance and impact evaluations.** In addition to the evaluations already planned for the project year, the DO 2 team has asked the MEL project to help them plan and carry out a mid-term performance evaluation of the KISAN activity for possible initiation in late September.
- **Subtask 2.1.1: Initiate EGRP impact evaluation.** David Evans, the team leader of the EGRP impact evaluation, will be arriving on August 10, 2015, to lead the design of the impact evaluation with the participation of cognizant staff from both DO 3 and the IP. Because of a delay in the subcontracting of Vanderbilt University to support this impact evaluation design, a senior Nepalese expert in impact evaluations will be recruited to support Mr. Evans.
- **Subtask 2.1.2: Initiate CRP impact evaluation.** The MEL project will continue to work with the DO 2 team to define the CRP evaluation. Dr. Carole Wilson of Vanderbilt University is scheduled to arrive in Nepal during the coming quarter to support the design of the impact evaluations planned for implementation by the MEL project.
- **Subtask 2.1.3: Initiate IGP impact evaluation.** The MEL project will continue to work with the DO 1 team to define the IGP evaluation. Dr. Wilson will support the

design of the impact evaluations planned for implementation by the MEL project when she is in Nepal during the coming quarter.

- **Subtask 2.1.4: Conduct H4L mid-term evaluation.** The MEL team will meet with representatives of the DO 3 team and the Program Office to provide peer review comments on the scope of work to the H4L mid-term evaluation. The initiation of that evaluation is not likely to occur before October 2015.
- **Task 2.2: Surveys, studies, and sector assessments.** There are no special surveys, studies, or sector assessments planned for initiation in the upcoming quarter.

Component 3: Support improved knowledge management within the mission

The KM expert will give a PowerPoint presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations during her debrief scheduled on August 3. This will constitute the KM assessment deliverable. This will be supplemented by the KM baseline survey of mission and IP staff conducted under subtask 3.1.7.

- **Subtask 3.1.1: Assess mission's KM tools and practices.** The KM advisor will begin the assessment of the mission's KM tools and practices, including institutional and informational challenges to effective KM within the mission, in the next quarter. This will also involve an assessment of the mission's GIS use and integration of USAID/Nepal's reporting systems into AIDTracker Plus (subtasks 1.3.1 and 1.3.3). The full KM assessment will be delivered to USAID in the first quarter of FY 2016.
- **Subtask 3.1.2: Prepare and submit for approval draft work plan to implement assessment recommendations.** No actions are scheduled for completion under this subtask during the quarter. It is scheduled for completion after the KM assessment is submitted for approval.
- **Subtask 3.1.3: Prepare and submit for approval training plan, syllabus, trainer's manual, and course references for training needed to carry out work plan.** No actions were planned under this subtask during the upcoming quarter. It is scheduled for completion after the KM assessment and work plan are both submitted for approval.
- **Subtask 3.1.4: Implement KM work plan and training plan.** There are no activities planned for implementation in the next quarter under this subtask.
- **Subtask 3.1.5: Prepare annual KM report.** There are no activities planned for implementation in the next quarter under this subtask.
- **Subtask 3.1.7: Conduct annual KM survey.** In the project's second quarter, the KM advisor will refine MEL's KM indicators, design related KM baseline survey questions, and analyze survey responses to document baseline conditions. These

questions will be integrated into the MEL project's planned baseline survey to be administered as an online survey.

ANNEX A: 'GETTING-TO-ANSWERS' MATRIX— ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITY EVALUATION

Illustrative Evaluation Questions	Type of answer needed (e.g., descriptive, comparative, normative, cause & effect, etc.)	Data sources/ collection methods	Sampling or selection criteria	Data Analysis Method(s) / Limitations

ANNEX B: PMP REVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Is the PMP organized with Result Framework showing causal relationship between Sub-IR, IR, DO, and Goal?
2. Does the M& E system clearly provide information on data needed, collection frequency, analysis tools, and reporting standard?
3. Does the PMP have an indicator summary table with target and baseline values?
4. Has the PIRS been prepared on the given format, with all required sections filled?
5. Do the indicators reliably measure what is intended? Is the collection and use feasible? Is the indicator objective, practical, useful, direct, attributable, timely and adequate?
6. Are indicators sufficiently disaggregated to project information needs by sex, age, parity, ethnicity and geography, facility type (outlet), particular group (women, youth, and children) where applicable?
7. Have opportunities for evaluation been identified and developed? Has the impact evaluation process been described with evaluation methodology including plan for evaluation?
8. Is the baseline and target reflected across short and clear description of methods used to generate target values?

ANNEX C: ACTIVITY M&E PLAN REVIEW TEMPLATE

Activity M&E Plan Review Template		
Checklist Item		Comments
1.Alignment of M&E Plan with the PMP ¹		
2.Status of the review of the M&E Plan		
3.M&E Plan organized with:		
a. Results framework		
b. Indicator summary table		
c. DQA procedures ²		
d. Evaluation Plan		
e. Persons responsible for data collection/reporting		
f. M&E Tasks Calendar		
g. PIRS for each indicator		
h. Performance indicator tracking table in annex		
4. Appropriateness of Indicators		
5. Feasibility ^{3,4} of data collection and analysis		
a. Data source		
b. Collection methodology		
c. Data analysis and reporting procedures		
d. Data limitations		
6. GESI compliant: Indicator disaggregated by sex, age, caste, ethnicity, location, or other relevant dimensions of importance for activity/project, as feasible		
7. Baseline status, plan		
8. Targets		